



Tax breaks benefit all at 8 and Woodward

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There's little to criticize in a bill by state Sen. Buzz Thomas, D-Detroit, that would use tax incentives to turn vacant land at the southeast corner of Woodward and 8 Mile into a bustling retail center with up to 700 jobs.

The state Senate unanimously approved the bill last week; the House, scheduled to vote on the plan today, ought to do the same. It would create, next to the Michigan State Fairgrounds, the biggest retail project in Detroit in 40 years.

The outdoor mall, a \$90-million development called the Shoppes at Gateway Park, will attract major retailers, including a J.C. Penney store to anchor the project, a Borders or Barnes & Noble bookstore, and four chain restaurants. It's especially good news for Detroiters, who are now practically forced to shop in the suburbs.

Thomas' bill would enable the city to use the recently enacted Corridor Improvement Authority to create a special tax district for the 30-acre site and return some state and local taxes to the developer. But the city and state will benefit, too, because the site now generates practically no tax revenue. Tax incentives have become essential to attract retailers to urban markets.

This project is a good example of how Republicans and Democrats, as well as the public and private sectors, can work together to move the region and state forward.

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